

HALLMARKS



FALL 1998



Hallmarks

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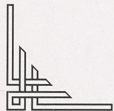


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starting over

i cherish the pureness in new beginnings;
an untouched canvas
not yet marred by inevitable mistakes.
still, it's impossible to start over on days like these;
some faint outlines seem to linger
with the hope of indecision.

i can feel the warm air
coating my skin like thick paint,
wrapping around me and slowly spreading
until it reminds me of your presence.
blue skies, like your eyes,
they follow me in dreams.
their color is reflected in the raindrops
falling,
falling quietly.

i'm forced to re-live a time
when hearing your voice was almost as good
as the comfort of your embrace.
i still hold on to the feeling of your fingertips,
and the way our lips once touched.
yet in my memories,
we keep moving closer,
dwelling in the moment.

today,
you can find a rainbow in the sky;
a myriad of colors
that embody my every emotion
and paint a picture
of our most perfect kiss.

Catherine Carroll (10)

Duet

In the evenings
I can hear my mother
Strumming
her guitar
But not alone
It is a duet
Her voice wavers up
To where I slouch
It is crystal, clinking

Bottles of joy
And old Beatles music
Fill the nightly silence.

Kate Gregory (6)



Rachel Worrell (12)

Country Sunsets

I was thirteen then. We had eaten an early supper, and I went outside for the country sunset. Hopping the rusted fence, running barefooted -- my toes grasping at the loose dirt below me as if I were five again grabbing blackberries to bring home to mama for her state fair winning blackberry pie. My hands not stained black, but a deep purple like the color of the sky at dusk. The horses I had once fed with pieces of carrot out of my tiny hand were grazing from the earth. How small my hand had been. How large the horse. How gentle the nibble. The trees reminded me of how I would go exploring through the woods for the waters of the secret stream. If I were quiet, I could watch Jesus walkers skim across the rippling waves and deer sip the clean, crisp water. I think of the fawn who had jumped a barring barb wire fence. She had trust for her mother just as I do for this familiar scene. As I sat there on a haystack in my cut-off overalls, worn-out sandals, and wispy blond hair, I listened. The hay crinkled beneath me, the birds sang, and the cows moored, but it wasn't harmony. I listened harder. I could hear the hand carved rocking chair squeaking while I wiggled in mama's lap. I could hear the porch creak as my grandmother paced to the familiar tune, as if carried by its every note. My grandfather's lips pressed to the harmonica as he belted out, "Rocky Top." The wrinkles in his face moved with every beat. His breath purged the sins of the day. His pale lips seemed to take in everything the red harmonica had to say. It could tell stories of early animal feedings and grandma's hot off the grill breakfasts: cheese grits, "pigs in a blanket," and her hotcakes stacked a mile high. I can hear these stories now as I reach into my front overall pocket and pull out the wagon-colored harmonica. I raise the worn instrument to my lips, savoring the taste of grandpa's teachings. I look up at the country sunset and begin to play a duet.

Kathleen Serck (10)

Addict

I'm an addict,
And he is my drug.
See, when you start, you never think it could happen to you-
That you'll be one of those people you hear about in the lunchroom
 who got
 Screwed over because they couldn't quit.
You think you're stronger than that-how could you ever be so out of
 control?
But it's so subtle-so hard to detect.
And every time you were feeling empty, it only took that one word, that one
 sweet
 Gesture to make you high-to make the hurt go away, if for
 only a little
 While, just his smile makes you forget you were ever in
 pain.
And after awhile, it made you numb.
You didn't care if it hurt or if you were happy anymore because you
 couldn't do anything to change it.
It's a never-ending cycle, an emotional roller coaster that leaves you
drained of all feeling when it's over.
And that one moment you decide it has to stop-that's the moment
 you realize-
You're addicted.
The invisible bond to him that has been forming in side of you ever
 since that first
"I love you," or that memory of him that has embedded itself in
 your heart-
You never knew about it until now.
That either road you choose from here on will bring you pain
 because you know you can't live with him and you can't
 live without him.
And it hurts like hell.
So you plunge the needle in your vein one more time-try to fill your
 self with all
 Those bittersweet memories-
Remembrances of what it was like to feel high.
High off his love.
And just when it seems like everything is closing in on you-like
 your heart has been wrenched so tight that you could stop
 breathing at any given second
You have that moment.
The moment you see yourself in the bottom of that black, hopeless
 pit
Sinking deeper in the waters of your self-destruction,
Begging desperately for your drug,
You realize just what you have become because of your addiction-
And you set yourself
Free.

Tricia McWilliams (11)



Jessica Lunden (11)

Boys

Boys imitate what they love:
hats like their father's,
breeches to make them think of grandpa,
and half unfastened suspenders --
all their own.
They tap their shiny shoes
and grin at one another out of the corners of their eyes
smirking
at their dirty-faced,
giggling shadows that are attached to the soles of their cocky feet.
Today the boys play grown-ups,
but tomorrow
the shadowless men will not remember the rhythm
in shiny shoes
and the freedom
of loose suspenders.

Maria Gumina (12)



Margo Martin (12)

PYRAMUS AND THISBE

Night filled with angelic stars and dusty skies,
blocked by assumed suspicions.
My cold breath frosted windows,
yours a little late
scraping stones with blistered hands.
Hearts, blood pounding
into snowy roots now stained
by one lick, one bite of innocence
curled up in caves of shades.
You came in minutes, not seconds
filling presumptuous shreds, crimson.
Pained, chilled air of ashen novas shining
in midnight skylines
brought impulsive endeavors of anguish.
You wither, plunged hatred into groins
I emerged from solitude,
intense ached sting with your dagger
blood-filled, love-filled, death-filled.
Una duos nox perdet amantes.
Now dyed scarlet berries remain with us,
combined mixed blood and flesh
dyed by anxious liaisons
seeped into small treed mulberries.

Alyssa Abkowitz(11)

Room 419

Fay sat outside the bathroom door, dramatically twiddling her pudgy thumbs and sighing impatiently.

She coughed loudly as a humid fog escaped from the bathroom and Fay's blue eyed sister emerged from the mist. "Uhh! You've been in there for hours," Fay exaggerated. She glared at the back of her sister's head for a moment and then stomped into the bathroom, yanking the door closed behind her.

Determined, now, to take her time, she investigated the contents of the unfamiliar room. She tore the wrapper off a thin square of blue soap and held it to her nose. Mmmm. It smelled like Daddy. She wondered if his aftershave was blue too.

There was nothing very interesting under the sink: toilet paper, Kleenex, and more tiny wrapped squares of blue soap. Next Fay stepped onto the toilet seat and opened a double-doored cabinet. A smile flashed onto her face as she ran her fingers over the bumps and lumps of the clean towels. They were a deep shade of purple; deeper than chocolate. Embroidered in the terrycloth, white letters spelled out Marriot Hotel. Fay wrapped the towel majestically over her shoulders and metamorphazised into Queen Marriot, ruler of the enchanted land of Fay City. She looked into the still cloudy mirror and, ignoring the bright green rubberbands and dull metal wires of her 8 month old braces, decided that she looked very much like the ruler of an enchanted city, although she had to admit she had never really seen one.

"But even great Queens," she told herself, "must take their baths."

Maria Gumina (12)

Mother Winter

Slowly melting icy, just like my mother
Fragile without a reason
Freezing over my life,
Don't really mind the coldness
Sometimes
It feels warmer than I'm used to
Smiling effervescent
On the outside
Trembling inside
Crying.

My voice is growing numb
The coffee pot boiled over
Fingertips on fire
Dancing, fiery girl
Mother, you made me cry
Eyelids frozen open,
But nothing falling.
Jack Frost has entered the world
He doesn't like my way
My voice has moved too quickly
I can't, I can't
Say what I mean
Mother.

Don't believe a word,
Sorry when I hurt you.
I thought, I thought you hurt me
So I stayed ahead.
And now your face is cold
I want to warm your nose now
The way I remember, mittens,
Warmed by the snow.
Your voice has moved away,
You went and turned the light off
Just to, just to
Cover the darkness
I had, remember where it was

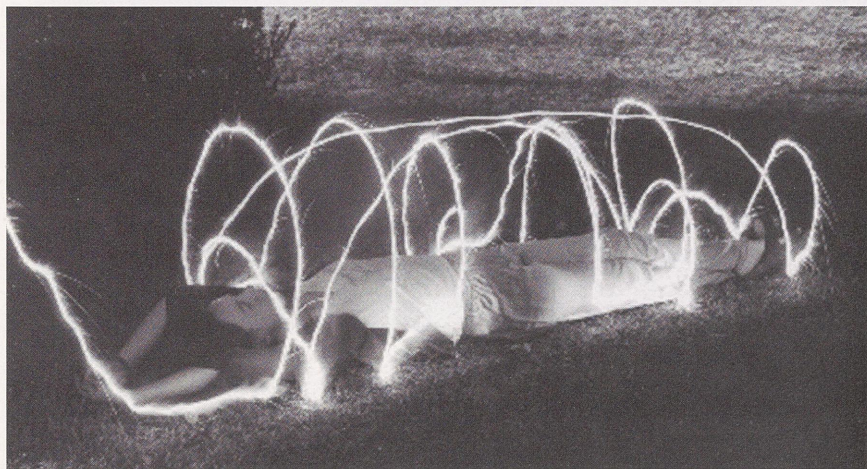
The car has stalled again,
Her voice is growing numb
Just in case, I can't, I can't
Say what I mean.

Lindsay Scruggs (12)

Magic

Here,
in the velvet pureness of night
we sit together silently,
breathing in the calmness
of the heavy July air.
Tonight
the sky is starless,
and your eyes are a tranquil ocean;
translucent blue green perfection
that drowns me
with each glance I take.
I lose control,
laugh,
quickly look away...
The spell you cast
leave me only able to imagine
the experience of your tender lips
softly pressed against mine.
I only seem to be capable
of pretending to know
the feeling of holding you close
or the comfort of your strong arms
gently wrapped around me.
Each day I find myself
sinking deeper
into the hidden sea of my emotions.
I'm falling farther into the waves,
begging for the escape
I know I can never reach.
For now, I can only swim
in the cold waters of the wanting,
the possibilities that await me,
and find solace in the dreams
of gazing into the magic
that pours from your ethereal eyes.

Catherine Carroll (11)

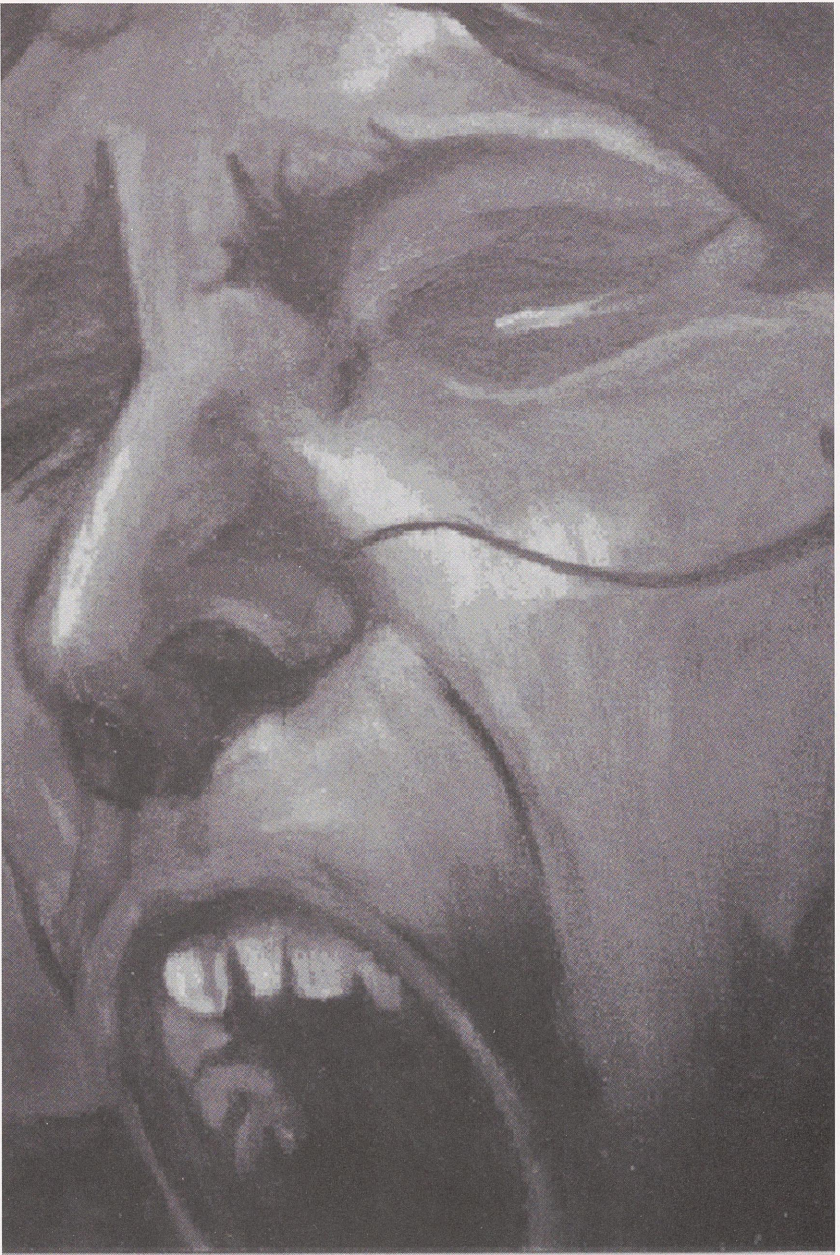


Maria Gumina (12)

Faces

I won't tell people what I remember of that day;
No one wants to face the memories that I have,
They will talk of how the drone of machines pierced the Sunday
morning calm, the wail of artillery surprising
the chiming church bells.
They saw the blood red suns advancing
like a swarm of faceless ants,
their dull buzz drowning the sky in its grayness.
Even the cries and pleas of men trapped
in sunken destroyers did not escape their ears.
But what I remember is none of this.
Driving to church, my two-year old asleep,
I stopped at the top of the hill, as always.
Making sure my son's face was still innocent and calm,
I stood looking out over the sparkling harbor.
When the road dust cleared from the air,
I saw a vision, though it was not God-sent -- or was it?
Goggles pinching his small yellow face
and eyes fixed on the horizon, the Japanese pilot
zoomed over my head, followed by a handful more
of identical pinched faces. I stared up at them, my arms flung
back in surprise; to passers-by,
I might have been shouting to the heavens.
During the following days, women gawked
and men grumbled, repeating over and over
the same worries of soldiers dead,
pride injured, ships lost. Yet I thought only
of that pilot's face.
I did not imagine my own husband, a navy pilot,
trapped or dead as other wives did.
I imagined him as that Japanese pilot
flying over a lonely mother on the other side of the ocean,
an image that replayed itself inside my head for hours,
most often at times when the baby was quiet
and the night wind rustled softly through the palm leaves.
Even now, miles and years from that place,
it sometimes plays again, as stinging and sharp
as the ocean air was that December morning.

Sarah Allen (11)



Rachel Worrell (12)

Independence Day

Soft sighs echo within her flesh,
along her cheeks, a glistening pain
and blended marks frighten her own
black reflection hiding the once
pink coloring and playful smile.

She had become the screwed victim,
always giving, then receiving
the three a.m. terse wake-up calls,
him stumbling in with several scents
around his neck, lingering close,
untied tie, never tied again
with leftover Jim Beam begging
for cheap encounters, normal wine
'em, dine 'em, all in a day's duties.

She fingers freedom's note for one
sincere moment and leaves beside
the scribbled signature of haste,
her ring, and whispers "Goodbye love."

Beside previous darkened scars
now lies a freshly bought perfume,
and lipstick tinting blistered sores
now revealed only when washed away.

Alyssa Abkowitz (11)

Lullaby

Before, lying with my hair spread
On your pillow
You loved me
Looking down
That was the song of our love
Things change
But my song was the same
High, low, deep, shallow tunes
That always had the same chorus
As before
But yours
It's just too soft to hear
I know it's still humming
Somewhere
Am I only a rhythm, beat, note
On a restless radio
Or am I your song?

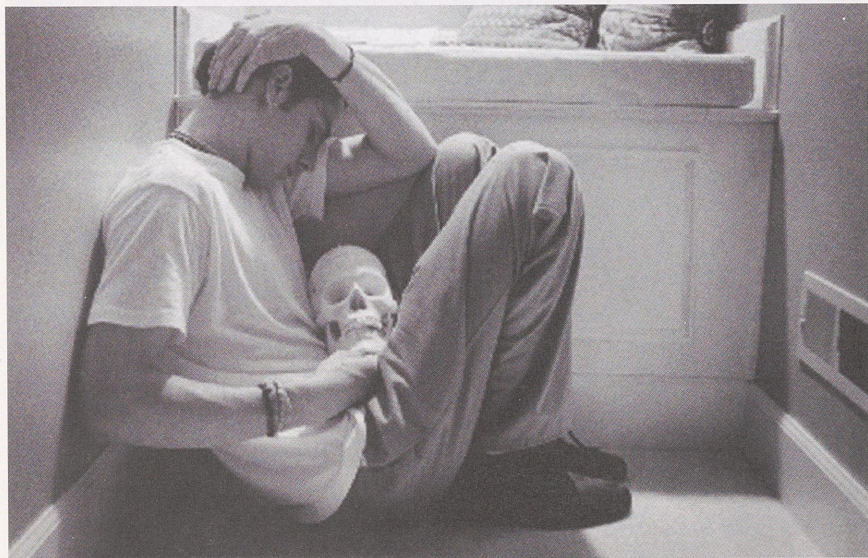
Megan Casey (11)

Fade

Purple blue beams sparkle
and drop to graze my nose
dancing, glancing off
turning green
Guitars echo in my ears
with no real tune
It's sweet though
The lights and brights
of our dark room
make me forget you
with that thick chest
wandering hands
silvery voice
that fills my ears
with soft grey clouds
The air sports a reddish glow no
while my breath plays with your hair
curls perfectly placed
and tightly wound
They coil around my floating fingers

Day slivers in at 5
stealing my favorite shadows
bringing dim yellow
it's gone, all of it
but your kiss is still the same

Martha Grace Orman (12)



Laurel Staples (11)

For Lee

I, tiny, sit knee-legs crossed
Under the stretching trees
And I am aware how small I am
And I see the way the leaves frame against the sky
I think;
I'm happy here
This is how I want to die

I brace my arms against the earth
Breathe deep as the breeze burns my throat
To spin me, burn me
I wish your life could end like this,
No pain, no blood, no cry
I think;
You'd be happy here
This is how you'd want to die

My chest heaves with humid air
I enjoy the quiet
I want it to be like this forever
Just the ground, the trees, and I
Lee, I think;
If I couldn't live
This is how I'd want to die

Jessica Crowell (11)



Maria Gumina (12)

So Where's the Frigate ?

*There is no frigate like a book
To take us lands away,
Nor any coursers like a page of prancing poetry.
This traverse may the poorest take
Without oppress of toll.
How frugal is the chariot
That bears the human soul!
- Emily Dickinson*

It was a dark and stormy morning-- or I could say, "It was a dark and stormy night," but then I'd be beating a dead cliché; and besides, 12:27 a.m. is, technically, at the very beginning of a new day, not the very end of the old one. But I digress. I'm sitting up in bed, trying to decipher the meaning of life.

Outside, the morning is as black as night; perhaps a few shades lighter than the ink-- the same ink that I spilled all over my favorite dress when I was six and trying to learn calligraphy so that I could have the same handwriting that Queen Guinevere and Maid Marion (two of my idols) must have had. We never got that stain out of my dress, whose collar was lined with lace-work as intricate as snowflakes the moment before they touch your flushed, wind-chapped cheeks and melt. But I digress.

I am now a world-wise seventeen-year-old, and I have known, ever since I was a mere fifteen-year-old, that this magnificent poem by the illustrious Emily Dickinson is me, just as Cathy knew that she was Heathcliff, and yet for some inexplicable reason, declined to be with him-- perhaps she didn't understand him. I am Caroline, not Cathy, and I'm not going to make her fatal mistake. I will fully and completely understand every shade, every nuance of this poem by 3:27 a.m. if it kills me.

"There is no frigate like a book to take us lands away." But what's a frigate? A boat, right? Wrong. According to Messrs. Merriam and Webster, a frigate is, "n, 1: a square-rigged warship." Huh? That can't be right. They roll their eyes heavenward, take a deep breath, and condescend to elaborate: "2: a warship smaller than a destroyer used for escort and patrol duties."

Oh, that's much better. I sigh in relief. I'm not much of a destroyer, or even a challenger. I tend to go with the flow. When I do deviate from the common course I'm usually part of a small company of friends or supporters. But we can navigate hostile waters just as easily as the greatest battleship.

"Nor any coursers like a page of prancing poetry." Coursers are race horses, right? Mr. Merriam and Mr. Webster apparently aren't big sportsmen, so I turn to Webster, Jr. (Webster II, son of the aforementioned Mr. Webster), who leads a life of quiet debauchery at the racetracks. "Courser n. A dog trained for coursing." No thanks, I'm not a dog. Webster Jr., places another bet, then informs me, "Courser n. A swift horse: CHARGER." Well, it's true that once I get an idea in my head I tend to run away with it, and I am a frequent victim of run-on sentences.

"This traverse may the poorest take, without oppress of toll." I love

(continued on next page)

So Where's the Frigate? (continued)

to travel, I will always love to travel. We need not go into the state of my financial well-being (or my financial illness, probably terminal); we can simply leave it, saying that liberation from tolls (or other travel expenses) is greatly appreciated.

"How frugal is the chariot that bears the human soul!" I had been under the impression that frugal meant "cheap," but Webster Sr., attempts to reassure me, defining frugal as economical or thrifty. I immensely appreciate his diplomacy. I'd hate to think that my soul, my essence, my very being was being pushed around on a rickety old donkey-cart. On the other hand, I'd probably die of embarrassment if it was being lofted about on some gaudy, pretentious, alabaster-white gold litter by steroid-pumped, loin cloth-clad male body-slaves like the Queen of Sheba experiencing a mid-life crisis. Yes, I'm quite content in my prancing courser-pulled chariot (but I'll take the male body-slaves when the Queen of Sheba decides to accept her age.)

Caroline Richardson (12)

My Always Brilliant Brother

In you I have my own walled labyrinth-- too complex to conquer, yet
beautiful to see.
You, brother, are a walking paradox --
Turning Macbeth into a satire, the Late Show into a tragedy, and Woody
Allen into a god--
you are too convincing for your own good.
Serving up insight as if it were the soup du jour, your opinions never get
cold.
You speak of non-conformists trying to conform, of conformists not
conforming
correctly, and of the rest of us, who are neither conforming nor not
conforming, and
therefore need to do something with our lives.
I can only observe your wit with my eyes half open because it's harder to
stare at than the
sun at noon.
Laughing over lattes-- though your not the avant guard type-- your poetry is
delicious crap.
To perceive you is to misunderstand you, and to misunderstand you is to
perceive you.
You always have been, and always will be, my always brilliant brother.

Molly Kaplan (11)

The halter bikini strap clenches
The nape of my neck
Looking down
I spread pink polish
Over my freshcut toenails
My bare back facing the lawn
Through the window
I am openly seen
The phone rings
You never say hello
What draws you to a person that pushes you away
Pink spills onto my thumb
I listen to you think
For the life of me
The polish won't scrape off
As though it's something I have no right to do

Megan Casey (11)



Margo Martin (12)

Stealing Wishes

They walked into the water without rolling their cuffs up or taking off their shoes. Bending down, they picked them up without a pause for thought and shoved the wishes in their pockets. Squish, Splash, Slurrp.

A little Chinese girl, full of energy and motion twirled to the edge of the marble. She snapped her eyes shut and threw her circular silver wish with all her might so it would go the farthest. They came back and took hers, too. "Why did they do that daddy?" she questioned with a frown forming on her face. "They aren't very nice" was his only reply.

An older man approached. "You shouldn't have done that, those are others peoples wishes," he said. "We didn't do nuthin" was their reply. "Then why is there a puddle around your feet and why are your pockets filled with coins?" No response came again. " You need to leave now," and they did.

I took a copper wish out of my pocket and threw it in.

Rachel Worrel (12)

Arms of Midnight

Out in the open in the dark
the wind comes
from trees comes
from soil comes
from heat.
It is the same wind
that blew through
my hair through
my fingers through
my youth in my
far away home.
I watch decay
in the wood beside the shed
and in the garden that is swept away by Sleep.
With my eyes closed I see
its seeds sinking
through the surface of me
growing vines around veins
daisies and lilacs cascading out
of my fingernails
out of my ears
out my nose
out of my mouth giving
birth to them -- life
from life --
until I have lost
my color and my hair has fallen out
and my eyes have fallen in.
Here, in and under
the moonlight, I am
gratefully lost.

Maria Gumina (12)

Two Sisters

I

Alone at night they sit
too afraid to glance behind them
to turn their heads and come
face to face
with their insecurities

They love each other
cherish moments spent together
they are not afraid to see the resemblances they share
and when one weeps and tears fall at her feet
they hold each other

They loathe each other
they are so angry that
words become twisted on their tongues
nothing sounds right
everything is all wrong
and giving a damn is the last thing on their minds

II

One is sultry and sun kissed
spends half her days whispering boys' names
dark and mysterious
spends the others screaming
from the inside out
because she is too alone to be happy
and she is too in love to do without

One wastes her hours
wistfully wishing on unmapped stars
freckled and girlish
wrapped comfortably in her world
then time rolls by and she loses herself in it
minute by minute

Together they are near perfection
but one cannot wait for the other
instead there are shoes to be filled
and one is leaving
a child will be left behind
to fill her own voids of emptiness
unravelling her slowly
from the outside in

Alice Orman (10)



Margo Martin (12)

Rearview Mirror

Sixteen years
I blew out candles alone.
I didn't realize--
You said, "Stop and look."
Sixteen entries of your broken heart
Running a painful race,
Here's water to numb the emptiness.
I stone cold, shivering
Childhood, your warmth.
Florescent Christmas lights
Fleetwood Mac records
Seven hour hugs
Your lyrics
Beauty in layers, only revealed to me.
Frustration, no one sees the you I long to be.
Summer's sticky ice cream
Balconies of Cerius and cool breezes
Buzzing fans
Laughing breadsticks
Twirled forks playing hide and seek with penne pasta
Endless, unknown paths,
Each a highway of pelting wind
Santana soothes the perfection obtained.
Hot topless Wranglers
Let's drive across the desert and dance until
Our precious sandcastles no longer filter into the midnight blue waves,
Until food is no longer a priority,
Until storytelling retires,
And I can walk on water.
Until your advice no longer stops these tears,
And I run out of ink and thoughts.
Until someone else captures your chuckles,
And you cherry is no longer the favorite in my shirley temple.
Let's drive until there are no more candles to blow out,
Until the angelic friendship stops beating,
And until I stop loving you.
Let's drive--
Forever.

Kate Berry (11)



Margo Martin (12)